

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

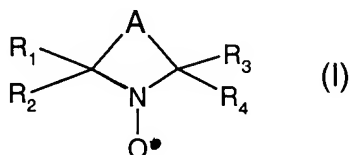
Please cancel claim ~~2~~ without prejudice or disclaimer as to future prosecution. Please replace claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 18 and 19 with the following claims –

A 1. (Amended) A method of preparing modified fluffed pulp, the method comprising the steps of:
oxidizing cellulose pulp in a suitable medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator; and

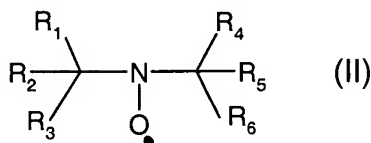
fluffing the treated cellulose pulp, the treated cellulose pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp;

wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in wicking rate and wicking capacity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

A² 3. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the nitroxyl radical mediator is a di-tertiary alkyl nitroxyl radical having a formula of



or



wherein A is a chain having two or three atoms; each atom is selected from the group consisting of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen; and the R₁-R₆ groups represent the same or different alkyl groups.

A3
5. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the treated cellulose pulp has from about 1 to about 20 mmole aldehyde groups per 100 grams of cellulose pulp.

A4
7. (Amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the nitroxyl radical mediator is in an effective amount to mediate the oxidation.

A5
9. (Amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the oxidant is an alkali or alkaline-earth metal hypohalite having an oxidizing power of from about 0.05 to about 15.0 grams active chlorine per 100 grams of substrate.

A6
18. (Amended) A modified fluff pulp formed by oxidizing pulp in an aqueous medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator and fluffing the pulp, the modified fluff pulp having an increase in wicking rate and wicking capacity as compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

19. (Amended) A modified fluff pulp formed by oxidizing pulp in an aqueous medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator and fluffing the pulp, the modified fluff pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp, the modified fluff pulp further having an increase in structural integrity as compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

Please add the following new claims –

23. The method according to claim 1 wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in structural integrity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

24. The method according to claim 1 wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in absorbent capacity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

25. The method according to claim 1 wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in odor reduction compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

26. A method of preparing modified fluffed pulp, the method comprising the steps of:

oxidizing cellulose pulp in a suitable medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator; and

fluffing the treated cellulose pulp, the treated cellulose pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp;

wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in structural integrity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

27. A method of preparing modified fluffed pulp, the method comprising the steps of:

oxidizing cellulose pulp in a suitable medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator; and

fluffing the treated cellulose pulp, the treated cellulose pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp;

wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in absorbent capacity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.